

Optional Course: Critical Perspectives on Work Organisation: Power and Identity* (*Modified Feb 2013)

Teacher responsible

Dr. Hannele Seeck

Availability

The course is an optional course available for students in the final stage of their M.Sc. in Organisation and Management Studies. Students must have undertaken and passed the compulsory Organisational Studies courses. Priority is given to students currently working on their M.Sc. dissertations. Doctoral and post-doctoral researchers are also welcome.

Core syllabus

This course assists with learning to be critical about the theories and perspectives learned - including critical theories. The rationale is that students will learn about alternative organisational theories, applications and techniques and to question and critique the traditional conceptualisations and understanding of organisations and organisational phenomena. Therefore, students are taught about alternative ways of conceptualising and understanding organisations and organisational life. This in turn is aimed at giving students the tools for questioning mainstream, as well as alternative, understandings and conceptualisations.

This course introduces a critical stance on contemporary work organisations. In particular, the social and political reality of contemporary organisations is looked at in detail. Everyday ways of organising, working, managing and communicating are examined, and compared and contrasted with organisational literature of a more traditional sort. Authors from the disciplines of Sociology, Social Psychology, History (Marx 1844; Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1976, 1978; Giddens, 1991; Goffman, 1968; Rose, 1999; Farr, 1996) and Critical Management Studies (e.g. Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Townley, 1998) are drawn upon in order to question the taken-for-granted assumptions and concepts of the traditional Organisational Theory and Management literature. In particular, the course draws upon the work of Michel Foucault, specifically his conceptualisations of modern forms of power (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2000). It provides multidisciplinary coverage of the organisational contexts and of a variety of professional domains in which persons with business or social science degree may work. A basic familiarity with organisational and social research methods is assumed. Issues and techniques in organisational investigation, discourse, decision-making and change management are covered, with an emphasis on their social and political aspects.

Content

Lectures and seminars: the course is divided into three parts. In the first part, a critique of the traditional organisational theories and concepts is provided. In the second part, the objective is to familiarise students with the critical management studies perspective. In the third and final part of the course, the focus is on explicating, discussing and positioning the Foucauldian approach to organisational theory and studies. While the main emphasis here is on explaining the Foucauldian approach, no prior familiarity with Foucault's ideas is assumed.

Teaching

Lecture (1 hour) x 15; Seminar (1 hours) x 15, devoted to the further analysis of specific organisational issues.

Written work

Three written assignments. Two article analyses of no more than 1,500 words. The student must also present these in class. One book review of *previously* read organisational theory book of no more than 5,000 words.

Reading list

- Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H (Eds.) (1992) *Critical Management Studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Alvesson, M. and Deetz, S. (2000) *Doing Critical Management Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (2000) *Tarkkailla ja Rangaista* (trans. Eevi Nivanka, with an introduction by Ilpo Hélen) Helsinki. Otava.
- Foucault, M. (1998b) *Seksuaalisuuden Historia: Tiedontahto; Nautintojen Käyttö; Huoli Itsestä* (trans.) Sivenius. Tampere: Gaudeamus.
- Foucault, M. (ed. P. Rabinow) (1997). *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. New York: The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (ed. D. Faubion) (1998a). *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 2: Aesthetics: Method and Epistemology*. New York: The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (ed. D. Faubion) (2000). *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3: Power*. New York: The New Press.
- Gaskell, G. and Himmelweit, H. T. (Eds.) (1990) *Societal Psychology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.
- Gergen, J.G (1999) *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Haugaard, M. (Ed.) (2002) *Power: A Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hochschild, A.R. (2003) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (twentieth anniversary edition with a new afterword). London: University of California Press.
- Hosking, D. M. and Morley, I.E. (1991) *A Social Psychology of Organising*. Hertfordshire, UK: Prentice Hall and Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Hämäläinen, P. (1991) *Rakkaani - työn sankari: perheen ja työn tasapainoa etsimässä*, Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.
- Marcuse, H. (1991) *One-Dimensional Man*, (2nd ed. with introduction by Douglas Kellner). London: Routledge.
- Marx, K. (1844) *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (6th ed.). Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Morgan, G.(1997) *Images of Organisation* (2nd ed.), London: Sage Publications.
- Rhodes, C. (2000) Reading and Writing Organizational Lives, *Organization* 7(1): 7-29.
- Ritzer, G. (1996) (4th ed.). *Modern Sociological Theory*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill International Editions, Sociology Series.
- Rose, N. (1999) *Governing the Soul: the Shaping of the Private Self* (2nd ed.). London: Free Association Books.
- Sennett, R. (1998) *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York: Norton Cop.
- Siltala, J. (1992) *Suomalainen Ahdistus*. Helsinki: Otava.
- Taylor, F. (1911) Principles of Scientific Management, in F. Taylor, (1964) *Scientific Management*. London: Harper & Row.
- Weber, M. (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Weber, M. (1976) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Weick, K. E. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*. London: Sage Publications. (A Sage Publications Series: Foundations for Organizational Science).
- Zey, M. (1994) *Rational Choice Theory and Organisational Theory: A Critique*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- * The reading material in Finnish language is naturally used only if the course is taught in Finland. Otherwise, English references are provided.

Assessment

1. Two formal two-hour examinations: two questions from a choice of five [40%].
2. Two written assignments of no more than 1,500 words: two article analyses with presentations [10%]
3. A written assignment of not more than 5,000 words: book review [40%].
4. Participation in discussion and debate [10%]